

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 /078 W

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R 061428Z JUL 76 ZFG

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8467

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 2318

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, YE, UR

SUBJ: YARG RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION

BEGIN SUMMARY. YARG POLICY OF DISTANCING ITSELF FROM SOVIET UNION IS PROCEEDING APACE BUT, ACCORDING TO FOREIGN MINISTER ABDULLAH AL-ASNAJ, AL-HAMDI IS DETERMINED "TO KEEP ALL DOORS OPEN". IN THIS CONTEXT SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN SANA HAS BEEN PRESSING FOR AL-HAMDI TO VISIT MOSCOW BY END OF YEAR WITH INDICATION AL-HAMDI MAY WELL ACCEPT. END SUMMARY

1. IN MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR AND DCM ON JULY 1 YARG FORMIN AL-ASNAJ SAID ANOTHER MEETING, JUST ENDED AND INCLUDING ALL HIS SECTION HEADS, WAS TO MAKE SURE THAT THERE WERE "NO MORE AGREEMENTS" WITH SOVIET UNION. HE SAID
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OFFICIALS IN SOVIET EMBASSY HERE HAD SIGNED ROUTINE

AGREEMENT CONCERNING EDUCATION IN PREVIOUS MONTH AND SOVIETS HAD ATTEMPTED TO USE IT FOR PUBLICITY TO EMPHASIZE CONTINUING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YARG. AL-ASNAJ HAD, THEREFORE, BLOCKED SIGNATURE OF A PROPOSED CONSULAR AGREEMENT AND A CULTURAL AGREEMENT. HE NOTED AS AN ASIDE THAT THIS WOULD LEAVE SOVIET CONSULATES IN HODEIDAH AND TAIZ WITHOUT STATUS. HE CONTINUED, HOWEVER, THAT HE EXPECTED TO SEE THEM OPERATE FOR THE FOQHESEEABLE FUTURE.

2. AL-ASNAJ ALSO SAID THAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN BESIEGING HIM FOR AN AFFIRMATIVE REPLY ON AN INVITATION FOR AL-HAMDI TO VISIT MOSCOW. YEMENIS, SAID AL-ASNAJ, HAVE REPEATEDLY PUT OFF FIXING A DATE, BUT SOVIETS ARE NOW TALKING ABOUT VISIT "AT END OF THIS YEAR". AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT "WE WILL NOW HAVE TO LOOK FOR ANOTHER REASON TO POSTPONE THIS VISIT".

3. ADDING TO BACKGROUND OF YAR RPLATIONSHIP WITH SOVIET UXTIOINX AL-ASONAJ WENT ON TO DESCRIBE PERSONAL LETTER HE IS IN PROCESS OF COMPOSING TO SAUDI DEFENSE MINISTER SULTAN CONERNING RECENT DEVIVERIES OF T-54 TANKS TO YEMEN. AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT IN LETTER HE TELLS SULTAN IT IS NOT IN INTEREST OF ANYONE TO MAKE YEMEN ENEMY OF SOVIET UNION; HOWEVER, PROCESS OF DISTANCING SHOULD CONTINUE SLOWLY. HE CONTINUED THAT IN FIELD OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE HE REMINDS SULTAN THAT LONG AMERICAN DELIVERY LEAD-TIMES MAKE IT ESSENTIAL FOR YEMEN TO GET SOME EQUIPMENT FROM OTHER SOURCES FOR INTERIM PERIOD.

4. COMMENT: OTHER EMBASSY SOURCES REPORT THAT SOVIETS HAVE BEEN TOLD BY YARG THAT NO RPT NO MORE MILITARY EQUIPMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED. AL-ASNAJ COMMENTS LEAD US TO CONCLUSION, HOWEVER, THAT A CONTINUING BUT SMALL FLOQ MIGHT CA ACCEPTABLE TO YAR AUTHORITIES EVEN THOUGH AL-HAN I HAS CLEARLY AND FIRMLY MADE ANOTHER SHIFT OF YEMEN GOVERNMENT IN DIRECTION OF SUADIS AND WESTERN COUNTRIES. NEVERTHELESS, AL-HAMDI WISHES TO CARRY OUT THIS STRATEGY, WHICH INIMICAL TO SOVIET INTERESTS HERE, WITH SET OF PLACATORY TACTICS IN ORDER BOTH TO AVOID RUPTURE WITH
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SOVIETS AND TO MINIMIZE ANTI-REGIME ACTIVITIES ON THEIR PART. WE THINK AL-ASNAJ IS HINTING THAT A VISIT TO MOSCOW BY END OF THIS YEAR COULD BE ONE SUCH TACTIC.
SCOTES

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